

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

AMENDMENT NO. 3641, DIVISION V, WITHDRAWN

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the pending amendment be set aside so I may call up Coburn amendment No. 3641, Division V, and I ask unanimous consent for its withdrawal.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? Without objection, Division V is withdrawn.

AMENDMENT NO. 3641, DIVISION VI, WITHDRAWN

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Division VI of amendment No. 3641 be called up.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The amendment is now pending.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I have every intention of withdrawing this amendment. But I wish to mention for a moment that this is an amendment that would have removed \$20 million from the National Marine Fisheries Service to study catch, bycatch, shrimp and relief and fishery profitability in the Gulf—the study of profitability. We are going to spend \$20 million to study profitability.

The Louisiana Seafood and Marketing Board considers this to be unnecessary spending and a low priority.

That is what the people who market the seafood from Louisiana said about this amendment.

I am not going to put us through a vote on it, but I think we ought to pay attention to the people down there who are now saying they don't need \$20 million for marketing and studying. They believe it is a waste of money. When the people of Louisiana are telling us it is wasted money, it is certainly wasted money.

I ask unanimous consent it be withdrawn.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 3641, DIVISION VII, WITHDRAWN

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I call up amendment No. 3641, Division VII.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The division is pending.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I don't intend to ask for a vote on this amendment and may, in fact, withdraw it, but I think it is something that the American people should know. This is about AmeriCorps, the National Civilian Community Corps.

There are three things we ought to know. The idea behind this is fine. They have done a great deal of work on the gulf coast. However, there are some real problems with this program. The House also has significant problems with this program.

Here is the key point: It has never had a comprehensive evaluation in 13 years to see if it accomplishes anything of importance. Compared to all the other AmeriCorps service programs, this one is about 50 percent more costly per person. This one costs \$28,000 per volunteer for 10 months. That annualized out to \$34,000 per person per year.

No. 3, no one is measuring any performance. There are no set goals. No one is saying what they are intended to accomplish? How do we measure that? Could we do it cheaper? Can we do it a better way? None of that has been evaluated on this program.

People will oppose this. I have no lack of reality in knowing we do not have an opportunity to eliminate this money. However, contrast what actually happened on the gulf coast with this AmeriCorps. We had people from all over this country go down and help. We didn't pay them a penny. We did not pay them a \$35,000 annualized salary. We had college students from all across this country spend their spring breaks, their Christmas breaks, their Thanksgiving breaks on the gulf coast volunteering. We had churches, civic organizations, local charities, we did not pay them a penny. They all came because there was a need.

There is something very wrong behind the idea that we have to pay people to be volunteers. As a matter of fact, it is an oxymoron. You cannot have a paid volunteer because they are not volunteering if they are getting paid. The motivation and commitment shown by true volunteers is unmatched by any congressional appropriation. The Nation is answering the call to be Good Samaritans and treat others the way they want to be treated.

This program was started in 1993 with good goals, and the purpose was to create leadership. We may have done that, but the fact that we do not know if we have done that, the fact that we keep throwing this money—which does not go to the individual volunteers; \$4,000 does, but it costs too much to operate.

I will ask unanimous consent for withdrawing of this division, but we certainly ought to have some oversight. I intend to have an oversight hearing in the Committee on Federal Financial Oversight.

I ask unanimous consent to withdraw the division.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Louisiana.

AMENDMENT NO. 3627, AS MODIFIED

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, I rise to ask unanimous consent amendment No. 3627 be called up. Also, I request unanimous consent it be modified according to the modification I am sending to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MARTINEZ). Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment will be so modified.

The amendment (No. 3627), as modified, is as follows:

On page 253, between lines 19 and 20, insert the following:

SMALL BUSINESS RELIEF FROM HURRICANE KATRINA AND HURRICANE RITA

SEC. 7032. (a) Section 3(p)(1) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 632(p)(1)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (D), by striking “or”;

(2) in subparagraph (E), by striking the period at the end and inserting “; or”;

(3) by adding at the end the following:

“(F) an area in which the President has declared a major disaster (as that term is defined in section 102 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5122)) as a result of Hurricane Katrina of August 2005 or Hurricane Rita of September 2005.”

(b) Section 711(d) of the Small Business Competitive Demonstration Program Act of 1988 (15 U.S.C. 644 note) is amended—

(1) by striking “The Program” and inserting the following:

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), the Program”;

(2) by adding at the end the following:

“(2) EXCEPTION.—The Program shall not apply to any contract related to relief or reconstruction from Hurricane Katrina of 2005 or Hurricane Rita of 2005.”

(c) The amendments made by subsections (a) and (b) shall be effective for the period beginning on the date of enactment of the Act and ending on October 1, 2008.

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, this amendment is a very important hub zone small business amendment. It has been cleared on both sides of the aisle and with all the relevant committee chairs and ranking members. I ask unanimous consent the amendment be agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the amendment, as modified.

The amendment (No. 3627), as modified, was agreed to.

Mr. VITTER. I yield the floor.

AMENDMENT NO. 3704

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, is there a pending amendment?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There are pending amendments.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I call up my amendment numbered 3704.

Mrs. MURRAY. Reserving the right to object, I don't believe we have seen this amendment. If the Senator would share the amendment with us quickly, we can take a quick look at it.

Mr. President, we have no objection.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from South Dakota [Mr. THUNE] proposes an amendment numbered 3704.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To provide, with an offset, \$20,000,000 for the Department of Veterans Affairs for Medical Facilities)

On page 253, between lines 19 and 20, insert the following:

MEDICAL FACILITIES, DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

SEC. 7032. (a) AVAILABILITY OF AMOUNT.—There is appropriated for the Department of Veterans Affairs for the Veterans Health Administration for Medical Facilities, \$20,000,000, with the entire amount designated as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 402 of H. Con. Res 95 (109th Congress), the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2006.

(b) OFFSET.—The amount appropriated by chapter 7 of title II of this Act under the